

# King County DNR: Protecting, Enhancing and Conserving our Natural Environment in 1997

- 2,652 acres of resource lands were purchased.
- More than 3,000 visits to local businesses were made to reduce industrial and hazardous waste.
- Repairs were made to 34 major river flood control facilities.
- Almost 80,000 Christmas Trees were recycled.
- More than 12 million gallons of reclaimed water went for irrigation, landscaping and industrial uses.
- “Get in the Loop” recycled campaign resulted in a 30 percent increase in sales of recycled products.
- More than 40,000 solid waste customer inquiries were successfully answered.
- 34 jurisdictions gathered to collaboratively identify regional surface water needs.
- One hundred percent of the biosolids produced at the wastewater facilities were recycled in agriculture, forestry or composting!



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## 1997 Report to Stakeholders



*We're working to ensure a livable,  
clean and healthy future for ourselves,  
our children and our children's children.*

## Looking Back on 1997 - Looking Ahead at 1998

King County's Department of Natural Resources completed its second year as a department in 1997 by integrating services around a vision of improving environmental quality and conserving natural resources. Continuing to integrate water quality, resource land protection, wastewater treatment and solid waste management services will remain a high priority in 1998. Word that Puget Sound Chinook salmon may be listed as an endangered species has made us realize, more than ever, that we need to promote regional solutions that address how we maintain high environmental quality while also supporting a vibrant economy.

As a result of integrating services, staff throughout our department have joined together to map out a natural resources strategy for King County. By working together instead of separately, we conceived a well-planned strategy for developing a new, integrated comprehensive plan that will address groundwater, surface water, water supply and wastewater issues collectively. In 1998, we will also be taking a thorough look at resource lands, solid waste, waste reduction and resource conservation.

The work of 1997 has set the stage for a coordinated, comprehensive approach to resource management in 1998. The Department of Natural Resources will continue to lead efforts to address regional environmental issues by working closely with cities, counties and other regional partners—all to create a better environment for those who live and work in King County.

  
Pam Bissonnette, Department Director

# The Department of Natural Resources will continue to create a better environment in which to live and work for today and tomorrow.

## Best Large Government Programs

The Washington State Department of Ecology's 1997 Waste Reduction and Recycling Awards recognized the combined work of the Solid Waste Division, Wastewater Treatment Division and the Commission for Marketing Recyclable Materials as the best large government program in the state.



## Regional Wastewater Services Plan

This plan for providing future wastewater treatment services, including the use of reclaimed water, over the next 30 years received months of public comment. The County Executive is expected to recommend an overall plan to the County Council in the spring.

## Water Reuse

Two pilot projects using reclaimed water at the Renton and West Point treatment plants were dedicated. These projects have begun supplying reclaimed water to the treatment plants and nearby businesses for landscape irrigation and industrial processes.

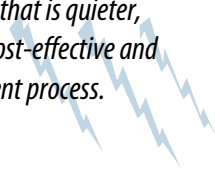
## Biosolids

The department assumed responsibility for owning and operating solids drying facilities at the West Point Treatment Plant and invested savings from the transfer of ownership in improved processing and product quality.



## Turning Waste into Energy

The Renton Treatment Plant received \$2.5 million from the federal government to conduct a one-megawatt, molten carbonate fuel-cell pilot project for turning methane gas from wastewater treatment into energy. The fuel cells could meet 80 percent of the plant's electrical power needs through a process that is quieter, more energy efficient, potentially more cost-effective and better for the environment than the current process.



## Closing the Recycling Loop

A dramatic increase in the number of auto repair shops—now at 49—that regularly carry re-refined motor oil for Puget Sound-area customers demonstrated strong support for continuing to promote high-quality, recycled-content products in partnerships with businesses and other governments.



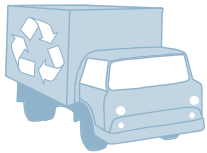
## Waste Reduction

An 11-week "Waste-Free Fridays" campaign with Bruegger's Bagels demonstrated that promoting waste reduction is effective. During the campaign, Bruegger's customers bought almost 18,000 reusable mugs and enjoyed more than 66,000 free cups of coffee for not using disposable cups on Fridays.



## New Transfer Station

The Vashon Island community agreed to the siting and design of a proposed transfer/recycling station, which will allow the island to close its landfill.



## Regional Needs Assessment

Watershed-based planning for regional surface water management was completed in partnership with cities throughout the region. The planning has set the stage for moving ahead in 1998 to recommend funding levels, funding sources and intergovernmental responsibilities.



## Resource Lands

The purchase of the Manke property near Issaquah completed King County's Open Spaces Program, while preserving a key link between the Sammamish Watershed and forested areas. The commitment to retain the county's open space, agriculture and forest lands, however, continues.



## Water Quality Monitoring

Ongoing assessment of King County's lakes and streams and sources of waste allowed the department to alert residents to a major, toxic algae bloom in Lake Sammamish. The department used the algae bloom as an opportunity to show the region what urbanization can do and how people can take individual actions to help reduce its effects.



## Surface Water Design Manual

Environmentalists and developers joined the department in helping update land-use regulations to reduce frustration over the permit review process and cut thousands of dollars from the cost of building new homes. The updated regulations, which are included in a new surface water design manual, will also better protect neighborhoods from urban flooding, prevent flooding and erosion from development, protect salmon-bearing streams and help preserve our lakes, rivers and streams.

## Flood Warning Center

A new facility for better serving those who rely on the early warning system for floods opened next to the Emergency Operating Center at the King County Airport.

